

First United Methodist Church, Dallas

Church Council Meeting

May 11, 2010

6:30 p.m.

Crossroads Community Services

Clergy Present

Dr. John Fiedler
Rev. Jay Cole
Rev. Tom Downing
Rev. Dale Hunt
Rev. Linda Roby

Staff Present

Sherrye Bass
Gretchen Combs
Quenetta Cox
Elise Daniel
Rocky Dwyer
Dana Effler
Burton Shepherd
Wendy Westberg

Council Members Present

Pete Bricker, Chair
Beverly Godbey, Vice-Chair
Jan Agey
Stan Agey
Rick Button
Michael Campbell
Elizabeth Cummins
Jerry Cummins
Susan Davis
Kristin Howell
Sam Mallick

Laura McCavit
Todd McCavit
Kurt McClinchie
Nathan Nichols
Greg Regan
Clay Roby
Gable Roby
Pat Rodgers
Betty Watson
Paul Watson

MINUTES

Following a tour of Crossroads Community Services (“CCS”), Mr. Bricker convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed all clergy, staff and Council members. Mr. Bricker then recognized Rev. Jay Cole, who introduced the following CCS staff and HELP participants:

CCS Staff

Catherine Tunks
Virginia Salinas
Sara King
Amber Willoughby
Jennifer Johnson
Jean Jacobs

HELP Participants

Jimmy Johnson
Bill Douglas
Andrae Wright
Alma Reveles
Owens Longmire
Gregory Godfrey

After Dr. Fiedler’s invocation, Betty Watson reported on behalf of the Senior Adult Ministries that several intergenerational programs had already been completed this year and more were planned for the spring, summer and fall. These programs provide opportunities for senior adults to interact with, mentor, and provide spiritual guidance to the children and youth of FUMC. Betty also announced that the Church will expand bus service for senior adults to attend not only Sunday worship, but also music and arts events. Betty concluded with a list of goals, all intended to strengthen and develop the role of senior adults as FirstMentors.

In her Adult Ministries report, Jan Agey provided an overview of the current and proposed Adult Education Programs, and she described the future efforts to strengthen and promote those programs. Jan also reported on new opportunities for spiritual education, like the new Downtown Bible Study led by Dr. Fiedler. Already the Adult Ministries area has accomplished several of its goals; for example, the Core Curriculum series has been completed. Other goals remain in progress.

Sam Mallick spoke on behalf of Youth Ministries to enumerate five goals for the year and describe the many activities and mission trips scheduled for the summer. As of the date of his report, 38 youth had signed up to travel to Arkansas for the Junior High Mission trip to Heifer International. Twenty-three more youth will work with SOS in Memphis on the Senior High Mission trip. The youth already have completed 452 community service hours toward their service hour goal of 2,500 hours by August 2010.

FirstKids Children’s Ministries also has wonderful programming planned for this year, according to Laura McCavitt. She recounted the success of the Easter Egg Hunt and Picnic, and described “Galactic Blast,” the Vacation Bible School curriculum that will feature drama, reading and crafts. In addition to traditional children’s activities like Camp Big Church, Hanging of the Greens, Infant Recognition and Children at the Manger, FirstKids will participate in several new programs this year, including P.R.A.Y., which stands for “Programs of Religious Activities with Youth.”

Kristin Howell began her report regarding the Developmental Learning Center (“DLC”) with a personal testimonial regarding the positive influence the DLC has had on so many children, describing its caregivers as “living witnesses to the Word of God.” She pointed out that many teachers have served the DLC for more than 10 years, and the DLC has become so well-regarded that the waiting list extends for a year and a half. The DLC focuses not only on education and early childhood development, but also on enrichment, offering art classes, dance classes and summer camping activities. DLC has changed its accreditation to UMAP (United Methodist Association of Preschools), to acknowledge spiritual as well as educational development. Because the DLC pays no operating expenses or rent, it will give FUMC \$35,000 in charitable funds in 2010.

Nathan Nichols, the Music and Arts Ministry representative, provided comprehensive summaries of the activities of the Goodrich Gallery, the Rotunda Theatre, the handbell choirs, and each adult, youth and children’s choir. Nathan highlighted Music and Arts’ new YouTube channel and announced that Music and Arts is “going green” with Constant Contact, a monthly e-newsletter.

In his Finance Committee report, Todd McCavitt noted that pledge income had gone up 2% from 2009, while expenses decreased by \$50,000 over the same time period. Unfortunately, year-to-date income is down slightly, but there is still time to meet budget by the end of the year. Facing the summer months, Todd explained to the Council that the Finance Committee would continue to remind the congregation to keep pledges current and pay ahead of vacations, if possible. Also, the Finance Committee continues to review and update various financial policies on an as-needed basis.

Dr. Fiedler spoke next regarding the historical background and timetable for a strategic planning conference commissioned by Bishop Bledsoe, in which Bishop Bledsoe asked Dr. Fiedler to serve as Chair. Dr. Fiedler treated the Council to an introductory video regarding the North Texas Conference Strategic Plan, called “A Time to Lead.”

Through the video and Dr. Fiedler’s remarks afterwards, the Council learned that the North Texas Conference contains one of the fastest-growing and most diverse populations in the country. For the Methodist Church to stay connected to Christ and his mission, changes will be necessary. Each congregation will be asked to use its unique gifts and talents to serve the greater good. The vision for the North Texas Conference includes adopting a methodology of “ministry by objective.” This methodology calls on all congregations to build collaborative partnerships, utilize connections and follow best practices to get results. The strategic plan contains four focus areas:

- 1) development of principled Christian leaders;
- 2) establishment of new places of worship;
- 3) eradication of disease worldwide; and
- 4) continuation of ministries to the poor.

To improve the work of the North Texas Conference and to increase accountability, the number of districts will be reduced from 6 to 4. Dallas will become the new Metro District, and Clara Reed will assume the position of District Superintendent (“DS”). The strategic plan also contemplates changes in the DS’s duties. Right now a DS primarily handles conflict management; to be more effective, a DS needs the power to hire consultants, obtain resources to help churches sooner, and transition from firefighter to mentor and counselor. The strategic plan addresses these issues.

Dr. Fiedler is pleased with the strategic plan for many reasons, but he believes congregations will embrace it because:

- (1) it contains no cost shifting mechanisms;
- (2) apportionments will not increase; and
- (3) congregations will not suffer from more control at the top.

Dr. Fiedler admits that the strategic plan contains “a huge trust factor,” but he believes in the long run it will provide a structure and framework to create a stronger and more vibrant ministry for the North Texas Conference.

There being no further business, Mr. Bricker adjourned the meeting at 8 p.m. after Dr. Fiedler’s benediction.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly B. Godbey
Vice-Chair

Dr. John F. Fiedler
Senior Minister